The Chrysanthemum and the Sword

Review Author[s]:
John F. Embree


Stable URL:
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0362-8949%2819470115%2916%3A1%3C11%3A%3E2.0.CO%3B2-K

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR’s Terms and Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html. JSTOR’s Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

Far Eastern Survey is published by University of California Press. Please contact the publisher for further permissions regarding the use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at http://www.jstor.org/journals/ucal.html.

Far Eastern Survey
©1947 University of California Press

JSTOR and the JSTOR logo are trademarks of JSTOR, and are Registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. For more information on JSTOR contact jstor-info@umich.edu.

©2002 JSTOR
him to a nearby militia headquarters. He was still dazed when he hit Kunming nearly 1,000 miles to the west. His rescuers had feathered him like a king, and passed him along from one village to another to a forward American base, refusing to accept any kind of payment for the trouble and risk to themselves and their families.

In large parts of China it could not be assumed that country people had ever seen an American. So fliers carried little "talkie" manuals and wore United States flags in their jackets with Chinese writing telling who they were and asking aid.

To sum up, the American soldier returned from his China sojourn with a variety of experiences, opinions and impressions. With individual Chinese he usually got along pretty well despite the gulf of language and culture separating him. But in his broad reactions to the country and the way they ran things in China he was apt to find little that he liked.

As an experiment in international education, this proves little, for the GI's reactions to China were reactions to the wartime China that he saw, to the Army, and to the deprivations of Army life in China, all rolled in one and all colored by his impatience to get the war over and go home.

Probably the negative, often antagonistic, attitude acquired by many men is already beginning to mellow. The tedium, the personal inconveniences like drab quarters and monotonous food, begin to fade. The glamour grows: the lush green fields and blue mountains, that lake with its temples, the ceaseless flow of life along the city streets, those girls, that incredible "jing bao juice" which sold for liquor, the columns of straw-sandalled soldiers moving up the dusty road, a thousand other sights and sounds — and smells.

All the boys are now experts on China. They went to the end of the world, and it was quite a place. Before all this happened, China for them was a lonely laundryman down the street, an occasional bowl of chow mein, a headline with unpronounceable names in the evening paper. Now it's a real place, with real people, and real problems. Perhaps this is the beginning of international education.

**BOOKS ON THE PACIFIC AREA**


The symbolic title of this book might lead the reader to expect one more exposé of the illogical Japanese. But Dr. Benedict, with the soft words of a fox spirit, leads the reader into the forest of Japan and before he knows it she has him bewitched into believing that he understands and is familiar with every root and branch of Japanese culture. And she manages to do this with scarcely a rough technical term or knotty logical argument. Part of the author's success in this is due to the fact that she is an anthropologist as well as a skillful writer and as such she is an old hand at studying and then conveying to others what she has learned about the "culture patterns" of exotic peoples, whether the group under consideration be American Indians or an Asiatic nation.

First of all she tackles the theme of duty and its myriad forms in Japan. In a society in which duty is so important, it is not surprising to find that the language has a whole vocabulary to describe this realm of activity in its different forms and aspects. In *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* we have the first real analysis of these terms in English — what they mean and in what manner they condition the behavior of the individual in the society.

The author discusses and gives cultural context for such problems as: why aggressive Japanese soldiers become cooperative prisoners of war; why the Japanese allowed the Russian generals to keep their swords after defeat whereas they often humiliated American generals in defeat; why the Japanese nation is today so cooperative under the administration of General MacArthur. Some of the keys to these problems are given in the chapters which analyse the emphasis in Japanese culture on "Taking One's Proper Station," and the great stress in Japan on "Clearing One's Name." In addition there are the varied duties one has to repay any favor received, to repay one's parents for their trouble in bringing one up, and the special duties to those higher in station such as elder brother, feudal lord, and, supremely, the Emperor.

The role of self discipline in Japanese life is also discussed, it being pointed out that it is not performed from Puritanical motives but in order the better to live and achieve one's ends here below. The techniques of Yoga may be used in Zen Buddhism, but the cultural meaning of Japanese Zen practices is far different from that of Indian Yoga.

In a final chapter Dr. Benedict commends the over-all policy of military occupation in Japan whereby the American administration of Japan has accepted the "Japanese ability to sail a new course. It has not impeded that course by insisting on using techniques of humiliation." Humiliation techniques which might be culturally acceptable according to Western ethics would lead to trouble in Japan.

One criticism which might be made of Dr. Benedict's general analysis is that it ignores the fact that Japan is an old culture and United States a new one, and that some of the cultural differences between the two nations may be due to this fact. The frontiersman and the nomad are more likely to be individualistic braggarts than is the village bound peasant who must face his same neighbor day after day — a neighbor with a long memory harking back to past words and deeds, past favors and past slights. A man of an old peasant culture such as the Japanese is likely to be more meticulous in his etiquette and sense of reciprocal duty than either the frontiersman or the anonymous megalopolitan.

The book deserves special commendation for not taking the all too easy step of arguing that the Japanese have such and such culture patterns therefore they indulge in aggressive wars. The author points out that, on the contrary, there are many strengths in Japanese culture which may serve as a foundation for a prosperous and peaceful future if given the economic opportunity. The very techniques of "knowing one's proper place," and the need to "clear one's name" can be as powerful incentives toward leadership in peace as they have recently been in aggressive war.

*University of Hawaii*

John F. Embree

JANUARY 15, 1947